

[Read Rep. Israel and Dr. Norm Ornstein's New York Times Op-Ed about Weekend Voting](#)

Most people don't realize that we vote on Tuesdays to accommodate the needs of farmers in the 1800s. Tuesday was officially designated as Election Day in 1845 to give farmers enough time to get to the county seat and vote without interfering with market or religious days.

But today, with so many people working during the week, it is inconvenient for many Americans to find time to vote. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, of those who did not vote in the 2006 election, one in four said it was due to scheduling conflicts. Other reasons included inconvenient polling locations and transportation issues. Many people commute to work and away from their neighborhood polling places and long lines or long trips back can keep them from voting at all.

The system needs to be upgraded to accommodate the needs of all American citizens. That's why Rep. Israel introduced The Weekend Voting Act, H.R. 254 in the 111th Congress, which would move Election Day to the weekend. His bill would require polling places in the continental United States to be open on Saturday at 10:00 a.m. EST and close on Sunday at 6:00 p.m. EST during a presidential election.

The Weekend Voting Act would allow people to vote at a more convenient time, which would increase voter turnout. It would also reduce lines at the polls since voting on non-work days would eliminate peak voting times that now occur before and after the typical work voting day.